

THE BEGUR BULLETIN

MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT & GAMING

MARCH 2026

MONTHLY REGULATORY UPDATE



WELCOME TO THE BEGUR BULLETIN!

India's Media, Entertainment and Gaming (“**MEG**”) sector saw significant regulatory activity in March 2026, reflecting a continued shift towards enhanced compliance, targeted enforcement, and structured oversight. Key developments included the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (“**MeitY**”) draft amendments to the IT Rules, 2021 to strengthen intermediary accountability, and MIB's notification of the Television Rating Points Policy, 2026.

A key focus during the month was digital governance and child safety. MeitY initiated consultations on age-based restrictions on social media usage, while Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra proposed measures regulating minors' access to digital platforms. MeitY also indicated an accelerated enforcement approach under the Digital Personal Data Protection framework, signalling increased compliance expectations.

Enforcement and content regulation remained prominent. MIB directed Telegram to remove over 3,100 piracy-linked channels, highlighting stricter intermediary obligations. It also mandated accessibility features such as audio description and closed captioning for films submitted for certification in specified regions. The Press Council of India further issued an advisory reinforcing standards for election reporting.

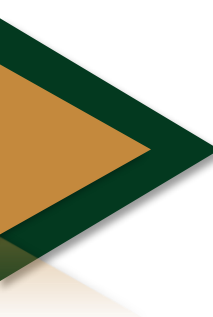
Judicial developments underscored both procedural discipline and evolving digital rights. Courts clarified the scope of “groundless threats” under copyright law, strengthened personality rights protections, and emphasised reliance on statutory remedies under the IT Rules. The Supreme Court reiterated safeguards against misuse of criminal copyright proceedings, while the Delhi High Court adopted a mediation-oriented approach in commercial disputes.

This March 2026 Regulatory Update summarises the key legislative, policy, enforcement, and judicial developments shaping the MEG sector, providing stakeholders with a clear view of emerging compliance and governance expectations.

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Enjoy reading, here's to staying informed, compliant, and capital-ready!

- Team Begur





LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

1. PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (INTERMEDIARY GUIDELINES AND DIGITAL MEDIA ETHICS CODE) RULES, 2021

MeiTY on March 30, 2026 invited stakeholder comments on draft amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“**Rules**”) to strengthen intermediary compliance and digital media oversight.

Key Provisions:

a) Strengthened Compliance Obligations:

Intermediaries are required to comply with clarifications, advisories, directions, standard operating procedures, codes of practice and guidelines issued by the Ministry, which will form part of due diligence obligations under section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 (“**Act**”).

b) Retention Obligations Clarified:

Amendments clarify that data retention obligations under the Rules operate without prejudice to requirements under other applicable laws.

c) Expanded Applicability:

Provisions relating to digital media ethics will apply to intermediaries and to news and current affairs content hosted on intermediary platforms by users who are not publishers.

d) Strengthening of Oversight Mechanism:

The scope of the Inter-Departmental Committee is expanded to consider not only complaints but also matters referred by the Ministry.

e) Nature of Amendments:

The amendments are clarificatory and procedural in nature, aimed at improving legal certainty, enforceability of Ministry directions, and effectiveness of content regulation mechanisms.

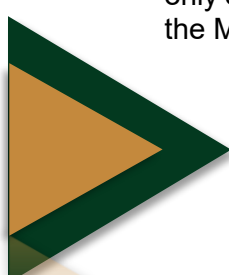
B&P View: The proposed amendments seek to strengthen the regulatory framework governing intermediaries by formalising compliance with Ministry-issued directions and expanding oversight over digital media content. While the changes enhance regulatory clarity and accountability, they also increase compliance obligations for intermediaries and broaden the scope of governmental oversight in relation to intermediary-hosted content.

2. GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES TRP 2026 POLICY: TIGHTER AUDITS AND EXPANDED VIEWERSHIP MEASUREMENT

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (“**MIB**”) on March 27, 2026, notified the Television Rating Points 2026 Policy (“**TRP 2026 Policy**”), replacing the earlier 2014 guidelines, with the objective of enhancing transparency, accuracy, and accountability in television audience measurement. The revised framework introduces stricter audit norms, mandating both periodic internal audits and independent external audits, along with oversight mechanisms such as field inspections and a structured grievance redressal system through nodal and appellate authorities.

Key Provisions:

a) **Expansion of Sample Size:** Rating agencies are required to increase metered households to 80,000 within 18 months,



and further to 1,20,000 homes, to enhance representativeness and accuracy of viewership data.

- b) **Lower Entry Barriers:** The net-worth requirement for rating agencies has been reduced from ₹20 crore to ₹5 crore, facilitating greater participation in the sector.
- c) **Strengthened Governance:** At least 50% of the board of directors must comprise independent directors with no conflict of interest, ensuring improved oversight and transparency.
- d) **Technology-Neutral Measurement:** The framework mandates audience measurement across multiple platforms, including cable TV, DTH, OTT, and connected TV devices, reflecting evolving content consumption trends.
- e) **Transparency and Data Disclosure:** Rating agencies are required to publicly disclose methodologies and anonymised data, promoting accountability in the measurement process.
- f) **Data Protection Compliance:** The policy mandates adherence to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, integrating privacy safeguards into audience measurement systems.
- g) **Exclusion of Landing Page Views:** Viewership generated through “landing pages” is excluded from TRP calculations to prevent artificial inflation of ratings.
- h) **Broadcaster Disclosure Obligations:** Broadcasters are subject to specific disclosure requirements to ensure transparency in reporting and compliance.
- i) **Penalties for Non-Compliance:** Non-compliance may result in suspension of ratings, and in cases of repeated violations,

cancellation of registration of the rating agency.

B&P View: The TRP 2026 Policy reflects a decisive regulatory effort to address long-standing concerns around data integrity, manipulation risks, and limited sample representation in India’s audience measurement ecosystem. By combining stricter audit oversight with expanded sampling and cross-platform measurement, the framework aims to restore advertiser confidence and align with global best practices. However, increased compliance requirements and governance obligations may raise operational burdens for rating agencies, while the success of the policy will ultimately depend on effective implementation and industry-wide adoption of transparent measurement standards.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (“MIB”)

1. MIB Mandates Accessibility Features in Films for Certification to Promote Inclusive Access

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (“MIB”) has mandated to filmmakers, producers, and industry stakeholders of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Andaman & Nicobar Islands that feature films submitted for certification must include accessibility features such as Audio Description (AD) and Closed Captioning (CC), in accordance with applicable guidelines, to promote inclusive access for persons with disabilities, with such requirement becoming operational from 15th March 2026.

According to the Ministry, films submitted for certification are required to include accessibility features such as Audio Description for visually impaired persons and Closed Captioning for hearing impaired persons at the time of submission. This requirement applies to feature films as well as related content including teasers and trailers. Submissions are to be made through the E-Cinepramaan portal along with properly synchronized accessibility files. For the purposes of compliance, Audio Description refers to narration of visual elements such as scenes and actions, while Closed Captioning refers to on-screen text displaying dialogues and sounds. The requirement is to be complied with in accordance with the notified guidelines for certification purposes.

B&P View: This measure is likely to enhance inclusivity by enabling persons with visual and hearing impairments to meaningfully access and engage with cinematic content across formats. At the same time, it imposes an additional layer of compliance for producers and distributors,

requiring early-stage integration of accessibility features and coordination during post-production and submission processes. Over time, this may contribute to the standardisation of accessibility practices within the industry and align India’s certification framework with evolving global norms on inclusive media.

2. MIB ISSUES NOTICE TO TELEGRAM

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (“MIB”) on 11th March 2026 directed messaging platform Telegram to take urgent action against large-scale piracy by removing over 3,100 channels found to be distributing copyrighted content without authorisation. The move forms part of the Government’s broader enforcement efforts to curb digital piracy and protect intellectual property rights.

Key Points:

- a) The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued a notice to Telegram directing the removal and disabling of access to over 3,100 channels involved in sharing pirated content.
- b) The action was initiated following complaints from OTT platforms, including JioCinema and Amazon Prime Video, alleging large-scale unauthorised distribution of films and web series.
- c) The identified channels were found to be in violation of the Copyright Act, 1957, which protects creators and rights holders against unauthorised use and dissemination of content.
- d) The Government directed Telegram to

comply with the takedown order within a strict timeline of approximately three hours from issuance of the notice, without compromising evidentiary material.

- e) Authorities identified over 3,100 channels distributing pirated content, including movies, web series, television shows, and other digital media.
- f) Certain channels reportedly hosted thousands of infringing links, indicating large-scale and systematic piracy facilitated through platform features such as anonymity and high file-sharing limits.
- g) The action was undertaken under the framework of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (“**Act**”) and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“**Rules**”) which mandate intermediaries to remove unlawful content upon notification.
- h) The crackdown is part of a broader regulatory effort by the Government to strengthen enforcement against online piracy and ensure compliance by digital intermediaries.

B&P View: The directive reflects a significant escalation in enforcement action against digital piracy, reinforcing intermediary accountability under the existing IT regulatory framework. The imposition of a stringent three-hour compliance window underscores the Government’s intent to ensure swift takedown of infringing content, though it may raise concerns regarding operational feasibility and due diligence obligations for intermediaries. The move also signals a continued shift towards stricter content governance and proactive monitoring of digital platforms in India.

3. GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE ONLINE GAMING ECOSYSTEM

The Government of India on 18th March 2026, reiterated its commitment to ensuring a safe, responsible, and accountable online gaming ecosystem, as stated in a written reply to a question before the Lok Sabha. The statement highlights that the recently enacted Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 is aimed at balancing innovation in the gaming sector with user protection and regulatory oversight.

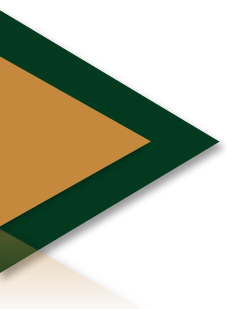
The Act seeks to promote legitimate segments such as e-sports and online social gaming, while imposing a comprehensive prohibition on online money-based games, irrespective of whether they involve games of skill, chance, or a combination of both. It also restricts the advertising, promotion, and facilitation of such games, along with the processing of related financial transactions through banks and payment systems.

Further, the Government has empowered authorities to block access to unlawful gaming platforms under the Information Technology Act, 2000 (“**Act**”) thereby strengthening enforcement capabilities in the digital ecosystem. The legislation also prescribes stringent penalties, including imprisonment and significant monetary fines, for entities involved in offering, facilitating, or promoting prohibited gaming activities.

B&P View: The Government’s approach reflects a clear policy shift towards prioritising consumer protection and financial safety by distinguishing permissible e-sports and social gaming from prohibited monetised gaming



activities. By imposing a broad prohibition coupled with strict compliance obligations and enforcement mechanisms, the framework signals a low tolerance for regulatory breaches, as also indicated by Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan. While this may enhance regulatory certainty and user protection, it is likely to significantly reshape industry business models, compelling stakeholders to transition towards non-monetary formats within an increasingly compliance-driven environment.





MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MeiTY)

1. MEITY ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR CLOUD SELECTION FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (“MeiTY”) vide Office Memorandum dated 20 March 2026, has issued guidelines to assist Central Ministries and Departments in selecting appropriate cloud infrastructure for hosting applications and data. The framework aims to ensure that cloud adoption is aligned with the sensitivity and criticality of government data, while also streamlining procurement approaches.

The guidelines require Ministries/Departments to classify their applications and data in accordance with the National Information Security Policy & Guidelines (“NISPG”). Data classified as “Top Secret” and “Secret” is prohibited from being hosted on cloud platforms. Other data is divided into two categories: **Category A**, involving sensitive data that could impact national security, operations, or finances if compromised; and **Category B**, comprising less sensitive, official-use data with limited impact upon disclosure.

Based on this classification, MeiTY provides an indicative mapping of cloud deployment options. Category A data is recommended to be hosted on government or sovereign cloud infrastructure with strict safeguards such as disaster recovery and regular backups. Category B data offers greater flexibility, allowing use of both government and empanelled private cloud service providers,

subject to redundancy and backup requirements.

The memorandum further outlines procurement methods, including nomination through government entities such as NIC, State Data Centres, and PSUs; Rate Contracting via Digital India Corporation/NICSI; and open procurement through GeM or RFP processes. Ministries may also constitute internal committees, with MeiTY representation, to determine suitable cloud strategies.

Importantly, the guidelines are advisory in nature and do not impose mandatory obligations. Final responsibility lies with the concerned departments to classify their data and adopt appropriate cloud solutions.

B&P View: These guidelines reflect a structured push towards secure and standardised cloud adoption across government bodies. By linking data sensitivity with deployment options, MeiTY aims to balance digital transformation with national security concerns. The framework also signals increased reliance on sovereign and government-backed cloud infrastructure, while still allowing calibrated participation of private providers.

2. GOVERNMENT CLARIFIES WATER CONSUMPTION BY DATA CENTRES IN INDIA

The Ministry of Electronics and Information

Technology (“MeitY”) on 30th March 2026 clarified that no concerns have been reported regarding excessive water consumption by data centres in India. The statement was provided in a written reply before the Rajya Sabha, indicating that current data centre operations are not adversely impacting water resources.

The Government has emphasised its focus on expanding digital infrastructure through the establishment of data centres, which play a critical role in improving digital service delivery across sectors. In line with this objective, India’s data centre capacity has significantly increased from approximately 375 MW in 2020 to over 1500 MW by 2025. To address environmental concerns, the industry has adopted advanced and water-efficient cooling technologies such as direct-to-chip liquid cooling, adiabatic cooling, and immersion cooling. Additionally, the use of high-density racks and energy-efficient systems has contributed to reducing both power and water consumption.

Further, groundwater usage by data centres is regulated under guidelines issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, including notifications governing extraction and usage. These measures collectively aim to ensure sustainable and efficient resource utilisation within the sector.

B&P View: The clarification reflects the Government’s intent to balance rapid digital infrastructure growth with environmental sustainability. By highlighting technological advancements and existing regulatory safeguards, the release reassures stakeholders that data centre expansion is being pursued in a resource-efficient and

controlled manner.

3. MEITY PROPOSES ACCELERATED ENFORCEMENT TIMELINE UNDER DPDP FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (“MeitY”) is considering a proposal to significantly reduce the compliance timeline under the Digital Personal Data Protection (“DPDP”) framework, particularly for Significant Data Fiduciaries (“SDFs”). The existing 18-month compliance window may be compressed to 12 months, signalling a shift towards faster enforcement of data protection obligations.

The DPDP framework, introduced to strengthen consent-based data processing and individual rights, imposes enhanced obligations on SDFs such as appointment of Data Protection Officers (“DPOs”), conducting Data Protection Impact Assessments (“DPIAs”), independent audits, and detailed record-keeping. The proposed changes aim to expedite these requirements.

The proposal is driven by concerns relating to rising cybersecurity threats, misuse of personal data, and the need for stronger regulatory oversight in sectors such as finance, social media, and digital platforms. It also aligns India with global data protection standards, potentially facilitating cross-border data flows and adequacy recognition. However, the accelerated timeline raises operational concerns. Large organisations may face challenges in upgrading legacy systems, implementing consent frameworks, and conducting DPIAs within compressed timelines. Smaller entities, in particular, may

struggle with increased compliance costs, potentially leading to market consolidation and regulatory strain.

B&P View: The proposal reflects a clear regulatory intent to prioritise data governance and national security over gradual implementation. While accelerated enforcement may enhance accountability and global competitiveness, its success will depend on the readiness of the organisations to comply within shorter timelines and the Government's ability to balance strict enforcement with practical transition support.

4. INDIA CONSIDERS SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR CHILDREN; MEITY HOLDS CONSULTATIONS ON AGE RESTRICTIONS

The Government of India is actively evaluating regulatory measures, including a potential ban or age-based restrictions on social media usage by children, amid growing concerns regarding online safety, digital addiction, and exposure to harmful content. The initiative is being spearheaded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology ("**MeitY**"), which has initiated stakeholder consultations to assess feasible regulatory approaches.

Key Points:

- a) MeitY has conducted multiple rounds of consultations with social media platforms and stakeholders to evaluate technological capabilities for enforcing age-based access restrictions.
- b) The Government is considering various regulatory options, including (i) an

outright ban on social media usage by children, or (ii) a tiered access framework permitting age-appropriate content.

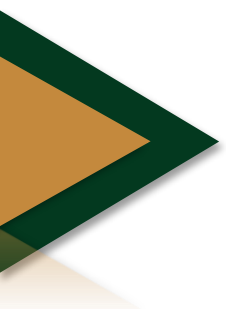
- c) A key policy consideration is the determination of an appropriate age threshold, with discussions centred around restricting access for users below 13 or 16 years of age.
- d) The move is driven by "deep concern" within the Government regarding children's exposure to harmful content, misinformation, cyberbullying, fraud, and addiction-related risks associated with social media usage.
- e) MeitY is also examining international precedents (including regulatory developments in jurisdictions such as Australia) while formulating its approach.
- f) Parliamentary committees and statutory bodies have engaged with MeitY on the issue, seeking clearer frameworks for age verification and stronger enforcement mechanisms to ensure child safety online.
- g) Concerns have been raised by industry stakeholders that an outright ban may lead to unintended consequences, including migration to unregulated or illicit online platforms, thereby necessitating a balanced regulatory approach.

B&P View: The ongoing consultations led by MeitY signify a shift towards a centralised and structured regulatory framework governing minors' access to digital platforms. While the consideration of age-based restrictions aligns with global regulatory trends, the ultimate policy design must reconcile child protection



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objectives with constitutional considerations, intermediary liability under the IT Act framework, and the practical enforceability of age-verification mechanisms. A calibrated, technology-driven approach rather than a blanket prohibition may offer a more sustainable regulatory solution.





PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA

1. PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA ISSUES ELECTION REPORTING ADVISORY TO PRINT MEDIA

The Press Council of India (“PCI”) on 27th March 2026 issued an advisory to the print media ahead of upcoming elections, directing strict adherence to the Norms of Journalistic Conduct, 2022 and established election reporting guidelines. The advisory emphasises that media coverage must remain fair, balanced, and fact-based, cautioning against selective reporting, exaggerated claims, or one-sided narratives that may influence voters.

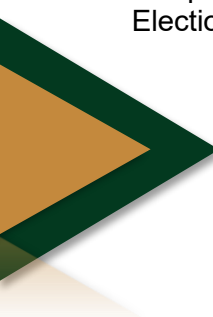
The PCI has specifically warned against publishing unverified allegations, defamatory content, or material that could incite communal or caste-based tensions, highlighting the legal sensitivities surrounding election coverage. It has also reiterated that newspapers must not accept any form of inducement, financial or otherwise, from political parties or candidates, and must avoid publishing government advertisements showcasing achievements during the election period.

A key focus of the advisory is the prohibition of “paid news”, defined as any news or analysis published in exchange for consideration. The Council has identified indicators such as identical content across publications, biased coverage favouring specific candidates, and promotional-style reporting disguised as news. It has directed media organisations to maintain editorial independence, ensure accurate representation of statements, and avoid covert political promotion.

Additionally, the advisory mandates compliance with directions issued by the Election Commission of India and other

competent authorities, reinforcing the need for responsible journalism to uphold democratic integrity during elections.

B&P View: The advisory reinforces the regulatory expectation that election reporting must adhere to high standards of neutrality, transparency, and accountability, particularly in the context of rising concerns around misinformation and paid content. While largely reiterative in nature, it signals a heightened enforcement posture and places increased responsibility on media houses to implement robust editorial controls. From a compliance perspective, media entities must ensure strict internal checks to mitigate risks of reputational harm, regulatory scrutiny, and potential legal exposure arising from biased or inducement-driven reporting.



JUDICIAL UPDATES

1. DELHI HIGH COURT REFERS LEGENDS LEAGUE MEDIA RIGHTS DISPUTE TO MEDIATION; DECLINES INTERIM RELIEF

The Delhi High Court, in its order dated March 11, 2026 declined to grant ad interim relief in a dispute concerning the media and commercial rights of the Legends League Cricket Masters T20 Tournament and instead referred the matter to mediation. The petition was filed under Section 9 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, seeking protection against the respondents from creating third-party rights or dealing with the said media rights.

The dispute arose from a Media Rights Agreement between the parties relating to the broadcast and commercial exploitation of the tournament, which was scheduled to commence on March 11, 2026 and was managed by Absolute Legends Sports. The respondents submitted that although certain payments were under discussion, it was essential for the tournament to proceed as scheduled to ensure revenue generation and smooth operations, and that the agreement had already attained finality.

Upon considering the submissions, the Court declined to grant any interim injunction restraining the respondents. However, it directed the respondents to file an affidavit disclosing all commercial transactions and receivables, including agreements with third parties, and further directed that such receivables be deposited with the Court towards satisfaction of admitted liabilities. At the same time, the Court permitted utilisation

of funds for operational expenses necessary for conducting the tournament.

Recognising the possibility of an amicable resolution, the Court referred the dispute to the Delhi High Court Mediation and Conciliation Centre, directing the parties to appear before it for mediation proceedings. The matter was listed for further hearing on March 17, 2026.

B&P View: The order reflects a pragmatic judicial approach favouring mediation over immediate injunctive intervention in commercial disputes, particularly where ongoing business operations are involved. By balancing financial safeguards with operational continuity, the Court has reinforced the role of mediation as an effective dispute resolution mechanism under the arbitration framework, while ensuring that the subject matter of the dispute remains protected pending resolution.

2. KERALA HIGH COURT DECLINES TO STAY RELEASE OF 'ANALI' WEB SERIES; DIRECTS PETITIONER TO AVAIL ALTERNATE REMEDY

The Kerala High Court, in its decision dated March 17, 2026, declined to restrain the release of the web series "*Anali*" on the OTT platform JioHotstar. The petition was filed by the accused in the Koodathayi murders case, who contended that the series was substantially inspired by incidents relating to her case and that its release would malign her reputation, create prejudice in public opinion, and adversely impact her prospects in the pending criminal proceedings.

The petitioner had earlier submitted a representation before the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which was forwarded to the platform's grievance cell but subsequently rejected. During the pendency of this representation, the petitioner approached the High Court seeking a restraint on the release, streaming, and promotion of the series.

The Court, however, declined to entertain the writ petition and emphasised the availability of an alternate statutory remedy under Rule 12 of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. It held that where such a remedy exists, particularly considering the nature of the grievances raised, it would not be appropriate for the Court to exercise its writ jurisdiction.

Key Observations of the Court:

- a) The petitioner's grievance had already been considered and rejected by the competent platform grievance mechanism.
- b) An effective appellate remedy is available under Rule 12 of the IT Rules, 2021.
- c) Entertaining the writ petition in the presence of such remedy would be inappropriate.

Accordingly, the Court dismissed the writ petition while granting liberty to the petitioner to pursue the statutory appellate remedy. It further directed that if such an appeal is filed, it should be decided without undue delay.

B&P View: The decision reinforces the principle that writ jurisdiction should not be invoked where an effective alternate statutory remedy exists, particularly under specialised regulatory frameworks such as the IT Rules, 2021. It also reflects judicial restraint in matters involving content regulation on digital

platforms, placing reliance on the self-regulatory and appellate mechanisms envisaged under the intermediary framework rather than direct judicial intervention at the first instance.

3. SUPREME COURT QUASHES COPYRIGHT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST SUJOY GHOSH IN 'KAHAANI 2' DISPUTE

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, on March 20, 2026, granted relief to filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh by quashing criminal proceedings initiated against him in a copyright infringement case concerning the film *Kahaani 2: Durga Rani Singh*. The case arose from a complaint alleging that the film was based on a script titled "Sabak", which the complainant claimed to have shared with the director.

The Court noted that the complaint lacked specific and substantive material to establish copyright infringement. It observed that there was no prima facie similarity between the film and the complainant's script, and that the allegations were vague and unsupported by any concrete comparison of scenes, storyline, or expression.

Importantly, the Supreme Court found that the summoning order issued by the Magistrate was passed mechanically, without proper application of mind or satisfaction regarding the existence of a prima facie case. It further held that the Jharkhand High Court had failed to appreciate these deficiencies while refusing to quash the proceedings.

The Court also took note of material circumstances indicating that the proceedings were frivolous and vexatious, including the absence of credible evidence of copying and

the lack of any demonstrable similarity between the two works. In light of these findings, the Court set aside the summoning order, the High Court's decision, and all consequential criminal proceedings pending before the trial court.

B&P View: The judgment reinforces the principle that criminal remedies in copyright disputes must not be invoked casually, particularly in the creative industry where thematic overlaps are common. By emphasising the need for clear prima facie evidence and judicial application of mind at the stage of summoning, the Supreme Court has strengthened safeguards against misuse of criminal process. The ruling is likely to serve as an important precedent in discouraging vexatious litigation and ensuring that copyright enforcement remains grounded in substantive legal thresholds rather than speculative allegations.

4. DELHI HIGH COURT PROTECTS SONAKSHI SINHA'S PERSONALITY RIGHTS

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court, in its order dated March 20, 2026, granted an ex parte ad interim injunction in favour of Sonakshi Sinha, restraining multiple defendants from unauthorised use of her personality attributes. The case arose from a suit filed by the actor alleging exploitation of her name, voice, image, likeness, and other identifiable attributes through AI-generated content, chatbots, and sale of merchandise without her consent.

The Court noted that several defendants, including chatbot platforms and commercial entities, were impersonating the actor and generating objectionable and obscene content, as well as falsely suggesting her endorsement of goods for commercial gain. It was observed

that such unauthorised use not only resulted in unjust commercial enrichment but also caused irreparable reputational harm, particularly where AI-generated images depicted her in inappropriate or objectionable forms.

Upon examining the material on record, the Court held that the plaintiff had established a prima facie case, with the balance of convenience in her favour, and that failure to grant relief would result in irreparable injury. The Court further recognised that the actor's personality traits are exclusively attributable to her, and cannot be used by third parties without authorisation.

Accordingly, the Court restrained the defendants from publishing, creating, selling, or advertising any content or merchandise that exploits her personality rights, including through AI-generated images, deepfakes, voice cloning, or similar technologies. It also directed the concerned defendants to disable and take down infringing URLs identified in the plaint.

B&P View: The ruling reinforces the growing judicial recognition of personality and publicity rights in the digital age, particularly in the context of AI-driven misuse. By granting broad injunctive relief against both content creation and commercial exploitation, the Court has strengthened protection against deepfakes, impersonation, and false endorsement, signalling stricter scrutiny of emerging technologies that exploit individual identity for profit.

5. DELHI HIGH COURT CLARIFIES SCOPE OF SECTION 60 COPYRIGHT ACT ON GROUNDLESS THREATS



The Delhi High Court, in its judgment dated March 23, 2026, clarified the scope of Section 60 of the Copyright Act, 1957, holding that mere issuance of copyright strike notices or threats, without initiation of substantive legal proceedings, constitutes “groundless threats”. The case involved Associated Broadcasting Company Ltd. (TV9), which had used brief excerpts of publicly available footage in its news content. The defendants issued copyright strike notices and alleged infringement without instituting formal legal proceedings.

The Court held that:

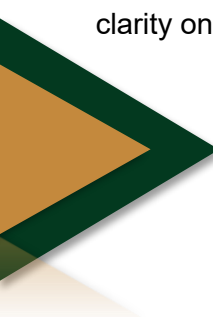
- An “action” under Section 60 must involve a meaningful legal proceeding capable of adjudicating infringement disputes.
- Platform-based enforcement measures, including YouTube copyright strikes, do not qualify as initiation of such action.
- A foreign proceeding that is subsequently withdrawn does not amount to “commencing and prosecuting” an action under Section 60.

The Court further noted that TV9’s use of clips was minimal, embedded within commentary, and in certain instances covered by a valid licence, qualifying as fair dealing under Section 52(1)(a)(iii).

In light of these findings, the Court restrained the defendants from issuing further groundless threats and clarified that intermediaries such as Google LLC are not required to adjudicate copyright infringement claims.

B&P View: The ruling provides important clarity on the threshold for invoking Section 60,

particularly in the context of digital platforms and intermediary-driven enforcement mechanisms. By holding that strike notices and takedown processes do not amount to “action” unless followed by substantive legal proceedings, the judgment strengthens safeguards against misuse of copyright claims as coercive tools. It is likely to have significant implications for content platforms and rights holders, requiring a more considered and legally grounded approach before issuing infringement threats.





STATE SPECIFIC UPDATES

1. ANDHRA PRADESH TO BAN SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CHILDREN UNDER 13

The Government of Andhra Pradesh on 3rd March 2026 announced its intention to introduce restrictions on minors' access to social media platforms, with a focus on safeguarding children from potential online harm and excessive digital exposure. The proposal forms part of the State's broader policy approach towards child welfare and responsible digital usage.

Key Points:

- a) The Government has proposed a ban on social media usage for children below 13 years of age, to be implemented within 90 days.
- b) The announcement was made by the Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, during proceedings in the State Assembly.
- c) The State is also considering extending similar restrictions to children aged between 13 and 16 years, although no final decision has been taken in this regard.
- d) The Government has expressed its commitment to ensuring that children under 13 are effectively prevented from accessing social media platforms within the proposed timeframe.

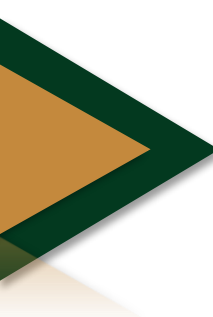
B&P View: The proposed ban reflects an increasing regulatory focus on protecting minors in the digital ecosystem, aligning with global trends on age-based access controls. However, its implementation may raise jurisdictional and enforceability concerns, particularly given that regulation of digital platforms is largely governed at the Union level under the existing IT framework.

2. MAHARASHTRA TO FRAME POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY MINORS

The Government of Maharashtra on 21st March 2026 announced its intention to formulate a comprehensive policy to regulate the use of social media by minors, with a focus on balancing digital access with child safety and well-being. The initiative reflects a structured, research-based approach rather than an outright prohibition.

Key Points:

- a) The State Government will formulate a policy on social media usage by minors based on the recommendations of an expert task force constituted for this purpose.
- b) The announcement was made by the Information Technology Minister, Ashish Shelar, during proceedings in the State Assembly.
- c) The task force, constituted in February 2026, has been mandated to study the extent of social media usage among minors and its impact on mental health, behaviour, education, and overall development.
- d) The committee has been given a timeline of approximately three months to submit its report, which will form the basis of the proposed policy framework.
- e) The proposed policy may include measures such as age-verification mechanisms, screen time limits, digital safety education in schools, and awareness programmes for parents, teachers, and students.





- f) The Government has expressly clarified that a blanket ban on social media or mobile phone usage for minors is not being considered, emphasising the importance of digital access for education.
- g) The task force is also reviewing national and international regulatory models to recommend appropriate legal, technical, and administrative interventions.

B&P View: The proposed policy demonstrates a calibrated regulatory approach, prioritising child protection while recognising the indispensable role of digital platforms in education and development. Unlike blanket prohibitions, the State's emphasis on age-based controls, awareness, and technological safeguards aligns with evolving global best practices. However, the effectiveness of such a framework will depend on coordination with Union-level IT regulations and the practical enforceability of age verification and platform compliance mechanisms.



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